

WALLY HERGER

2D DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

PLEASE REPLY TO:

☐ WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2433 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-3076

DISTRICT OFFICES:

☐ 55 INDEPENDENCE CIRCLE, SUITE 104
CHICO, CA 95973
(530) 893-8363

☐ 410 HEMSTED DRIVE, SUITE 115
REDDING, CA 96002
(530) 223-5898



COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON
THE BUDGET

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0502

May 2, 2000

Mike Dombeck
Chief
United States Forest Service
14th & Independence SW
Washington, DC 20090-6090

Dear Mike:

I am concerned to learn that the Forest Service Washington Office has allocated \$500,000 from the fire fighting budget to fund what the agency has termed "workforce diversity project proposals." In a letter to Regional Foresters, Jose Cruz, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, noted that Forest Service officials should use the funding in an attempt to "institutionalize diversity within the Fire and Aviation Management program." A copy of the letter is attached.

I believe this action reflects the Forest Service's near obsession with racial and gender hiring and promotion quotas. This pattern has existed for years. The Forest Service should not raid funds that could and should be used to fight fires.

Even if it is legal to redirect these funds, it is misguided. Last year's devastating fire season should be sufficient evidence that the Forest Service needs every dime of the fire fighting budget. The agency should hire and promote the best-qualified candidate for any given job, and ignore the applicant's race and gender. We will never realize the vision of a 'color-blind' society if hiring officials keep obsessing about race and gender. Quotas are divisive and wrong.

I urge you to restore this funding to on-the-ground fire fighting efforts. Please advise me regarding your plans in this regard.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wally Herger".

WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress